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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of 47 members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 4 April 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the President of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly and has the honour to communicate the following:

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia has decided to present its candidature for election to the United Nations Human Rights Council at the elections to be held on 9 May 2006 during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

The Permanent Mission of Slovenia wishes to highlight the following commitments and pledges of the Republic of Slovenia with regard to its candidature of the Human Rights Council:

The Republic of Slovenia, whose very existence is rooted in the popular striving for democracy and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, has continuously attempted, as a matter of policy, to contribute constructively and progressively to the universal promotion and protection of human rights. Human rights are represented in an important chapter of the Slovenian Constitution and they also constitute one of the key pillars of Slovenia's foreign policy.

In its endeavours to contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide, Slovenia has decided to take its commitment one step further and to put forward its candidature for the membership of the Human Rights Council.

Slovenia has always been committed to the aims and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and standards emanating from the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. Slovenia succeeded or ratified major international instruments in the field of human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol; the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the four Geneva Conventions and their two Additional Protocols; the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; and 75 International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions, including all eight core ILO Conventions. In 2006 the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture will be ratified and Additional Protocol III to the Geneva Conventions will be signed. According to the Slovenian Constitution, these international legal instruments are directly applicable in the Slovenian legal order.

Slovenia submits regularly periodic reports required by the human rights treaties and takes steps to publicize and follow up within Slovenia on the comments and recommendations of the treaty bodies. Slovenia has also accepted being subject to all communication procedures of the United Nations human rights treaties that it has ratified.

Slovenia has further actively demonstrated its support for the drafting of an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to provide a communication procedure to the set of rights emanating from the treaty.

In 2002, Slovenia issued a standing and open invitation to the mandate holders of all special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. We have been and remain committed to fully cooperating with the special procedures.

Slovenia has strongly supported the idea of a new Human Rights Council since it was first suggested, has actively participated in its creation and has welcomed the establishment of the Human Rights Council, including its innovative features, such as the universal scrutiny for all.

At the same time, Slovenia used to and will continue to support the strengthening of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This includes Slovenia's support for doubling its regular budget financing in the course of the next five years so as to enable the Office to strengthen the work of the Council by assisting States effectively and objectively in implementing human rights norms and standards. Slovenia will also continue to provide, to the best of its abilities, voluntary contributions to the Office and the rest of the United Nations human rights system.

Slovenia has an active and independent national human rights institution, the Human Rights Ombudsman, providing independent assessment of the implementation of human rights obligations and standards. The Ombudsman's annual report on the human rights situation in Slovenia is a public document. The last report was made available through official channels to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights immediately after its publication in July 2005 for the use of the treaty bodies and other interested mechanisms. It has also been Slovenia's consistent policy to support the inclusion of civil society's voice towards the common goal of the improvement of the human rights situation both nationally, regionally and internationally. We will continue to promote an inclusive approach with regard to the Council.

It would be a particular privilege for Slovenia to be granted the honour to serve as a member of this important body. This candidature is the first effort of Slovenia to serve as a member in the main global intergovernmental human rights body although it has continuously participated as active observer in the work of the Commission on Human Rights. Slovenia would highly value the opportunity to contribute to the work of the new Council, based on its experience in promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. If elected, Slovenia would appreciate the possibility of engaging with others in a constructive promotion and effective implementation of universal human rights standards. To that end, Slovenia believes the new Council should be a forum where the voice of small States is fairly represented.

Slovenia hopes to be viewed as a country that demonstrates the highest level of commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, stands ready to engage in substantive dialogue with Member States on further elaboration of Slovenia's views and aspirations for membership on the Human Rights Council and would appreciate it if, in order to facilitate the above, the present communication would be placed on the Secretariat's list of candidates.